

Kings assassination-news leads; new witness witness

HW 6/27/74

Had it not been that I knew I would have to get together with Cesar after his return from Memphis I would not have agreed to make a trip to Washington just to do a TV show, but knowing I would I agreed to do the all-black Marambee on WTOP-TV, shorted to a 9 a.m. half-hour summertime.

Had it not been ^{for} the way I "project" David Grines would not have called me and later done the favors he did.

And had he not decided to phone the special number for the community-relations office of the station, I'd not have gotten his message in time because the switchboard was, as I later learned in leaving, had an unusually strong and favorable reaction and was swamped. But because he phoned community relations saying he had some information for me, he was put through to the director while the show was being aired.

When he told me his story and I learned he would be home all day, I arranged to make his Seven Corners, Va., home, near Falls Church (Chateaux Apts., Pat. Henry Drive and Leesburg Pike, Bldg. 5, #532) the last stop. Cesar didn't question that he should accompany me so we didn't do other things and went. *4171 Leesburg Pike 22044*

Dave is a court reporter, Shirley, his second wife, is a very pleasant and exceedingly talkative woman with a fondness for poetry and people. When he has jobs away from home she goes with him, taking a tape recorder just to record people. She plays this random conversation as what she calls "a tub talk," when she is soaking in the tub. For real.

June 7, 1972 Dave had a hearing at Harpers' Ferry to cover. She accompanied him and fortunately they stayed at the New Hawaiian Motel, near Brunswick, which is almost a suburb of Frederick, on the Maryland Potomac shore opposite Leesburg, Va.

It was a long hearing, Dave was late getting back, she had been reading poetry to herself and she became slightly disturbed by the raucous noises coming from the next room. When she went to ask that they reduce the noise she found a drunken party of a number of men in progress. One, a beer drinker, got friendly. He came into her room to talk. He was quite drunk, he knew she was taping him (it says so on the tape), and he blabbed much.

Also much less than he wanted to because she kept trying to save his soul. Dave came back and wanted most of all to get the guy out, so it was cut short. There was no more of the King conversation after Dave got there. Man using name Bill Harris about 5'9", b. 1927 White Lake, N.W., full head hair, 160lbs, white, gaunt face, lean.

There are a few minor inconsistencies that can be attributed to intoxication but should not be without checking if it is possible. Like saying he left the labor movement as soon as King was assassinated and that "I have been in the labor movement for the past 11 years," or words to that effect. He lied about himself (master in political science, which his language denies.) But what he said crosses into the real leads we have so thoroughly that the rest gets a credibility that requires checking. A storm broke as we left, I got soaked running to Jim's car, we were both late, so we agreed to get together in Bud's office first thing this morning to plan more. My initial suggestion was that we get in touch with the international union head whose name was mentioned throughout as the first step, to check and learn about Harris and to let him know.

Harris says he was southeastern regional director of ~~SENA~~ State County and Municipal workers (which he also seems to refer to as the Asmie (phon) Corporation and had been assigned to the garbage workers strike in Memphis. They paid King's air fare to get him there. After the first march and the violence they received assurances there would be no more violence from all the leaders and ministers. Here his errors get real interesting. Like King returned two days later. When this is bracketed with his claimed advance knowledge of the assassination plot, which now seems to prey heavily on his mind, ~~xxxxx~~ his saying that King returned two days later is ~~xxxxx~~ interesting, making me wonder if the plotting was two days later. He is repetitiously explicit in saying that the Teamsters did it, and there are solid leads so indicating. Not the international, the Baton Rouge-Louisiana-Partin local. I think more likely Partin himself, one of my earliest suspicions.

He makes mention of a friend and associate, Jim or Joe Pierce. (I asked him to make notes while I asked questions before we heard tape, so this is from next a.m. recollection, in haste prior to going to D.C., again and therefore also can't be complete.)

Fortunately, the Gaines' are unusually well equipped with recorders. She was using their Uher 4000 or 5000. We heard it on the 4000 while Dave simultaneously dubbed two cassettes for me, one for him and one for me, on a Sony TV45 and their son Rick's Panasonic. With an elaborate mixer.

I played the cassette for Lil and Howard and getting home and the quality is good.

Harris's voice trails off into muttering when Shirley tries to get him to hush so she can save his soul, but the words can be clear enough with the proper work. I have asked these two things: that they make a dub isolating Dave, cutting Shirley out entirely; and that in his free time Dave make the best possible transcript. Rock can make the dub and says he will. We can then raise the volume when his voice is low.

The men seemed to be construction workers and were dressed that way but Harris's hands were not calloused. They seemed to be travelling in a pickup truck.

When Shirley heard the first reports on the Livingston caper on WCAY, she phoned the station with this story and got a so-what-else-is-new reaction. When she told Dave what she had heard on the radio he made a dub of the tape and took it to the FBI WFO in the Old Post Office bldg. They have heard nothing in the almost two months since then.

It is easy for Dave to establish dates by correlation with the jobs he was on. He says he went to the FBI May 27 by checking some record he had. I had asked the date.

Harris is explicit in saying that he is one of those who knew in advance of the plot. I have at least three other witnesses saying the same thing but not necessarily about the same plot and in one case most likely not. He repeats that someone decided the movement needed a martyr, which is also interesting because that seems not to have been the motive at all. Repeats references to the suffering of 20,000,000 people yet speaks of Jews in a rather racist (not not certainly because he was drunk) way.

Says he was there when \$10,000,000 was paid and that Ray knew nothing about this but was paid to be there. Not precisely the published formulation but not necessarily personal knowledge because it could be a reformulation of what he had read.

Wrong in saying that only 5 people knew where King was staying. Picture front page. But including himself as one is interesting because it is probable that where King was staying was not announced.